

Seventy Five people participated in the AAUW Legislative Day held January 27, 1982 at the Market Restaurant in Columbia. Melba Sprague served as chairperson for the conference and introduced the panelists. She stated that in 1981 the South Carolina Legislature revised the mortality tables used as guide lines in civil suits. A girl born today can "by law" be expected to live 76 years...a boy - 71. If a person is age 99 it is expected that they will live 6 more months. Ms. Sprague placed the issue before the group..."by law a woman will live 76 years...but what will the quality of her life be. The theme for the conference was "Quality of Life; Your Right by Law" Ms. Barbara Moxon gave an ERA Update (under separate heading).

We would like to believe we are completely masters of our own life patterns, said Ms. Sprague, but circumstances and our environment create our options...or lack of options. Speaking on this panel were: Ellie Setser, Life Scientist Medical University of S. C.; Lelia White, Professor of Religion, Voorhees College; Mildred Bercik, Social Worker, Children's Protective Services Spartanburg County Department of Social Services.

Ms. Setser pointed out that as women, their lives are dominated by the birth cycle. With birth control modern women are able to control their own bodies...their biology. The raging hormone theory has long since been dispelled. Abortion - the birth cycle is the most divisive issue today. The legislative bills that are in congress today put a woman in the background as to control of her own body. Ms. Setser looked at the issue from the point of view of a life scientist. Life, she said, begins at conception; life is a continuous process; life exists before conception; the test is ...is it living, does it move, does it respond to stimuli. The larger question is "When does Human Life begin?" This, is a question that science cant deal with; you can't test humanness. She told that the chairman of the Department of Genetics at Yale University said that science cant test this; it is more for social science to address.

Ms. Setser reported that 24 weeks after a woman's last menstrual cycle the fetus can exist outside her body. Only 8% of of abortions in U. S. occur during the second trimenter and nearly 90% in the first trimenter.

If the Human Life Amendments now before Congress should pass the following powers would be possessed by the egg:

- It would make it a citizen

- It could make abortion a homicide

- It would confuse inheritance rights

- It would make the IUD birth control illegal

- A D & C would be a questionable service for a doctor

- A woman would have to be presumed to be pregnant to protect the doctor from law suits

- At what point would a doctor be guilty of breaking the law

- The test of the amniotic fluid to determine severe handicaps would be illegal

The right of Freedom of Choise is clear, concluded Ms. Setser. No one, she said, is "pro" abortion; however, Freedom of Choice needs to be preserved...the freedom for a woman to control her body.

Ms. Lelia White pointed out that fears come in the areas of least understanding. From a religious point of view, the outlook for women has been glum; it has been male oriented from the earliest religions. Some of the Eastern Religions believe that life cannot exist without male and female; while the Western Religions have believed it is always the man. Ms. White spoke of the creation story and Adam and Eve. She asked the participants to notice it is more important to see "let US create man in OUR image male and female. It is beyond logic to believe that a man could create his daughter from his rib. The concept was to show the role of women as inferior, according to the belief at that time. The Judeo-Christian belief has adopted and interpreted laws, accepted the attitudeand reflected the views of the male.

When the female has attempted to be more assertive, she was accused of being aggressive. The legislative force is primarily male and the laws are male oriented. Power, she told the participants, never concedes power without a struggle. The Church has assumed that their leaders had to be male. In the view of churchmen, when the Old and New Testament refers to "brotherhood of man" the female was omitted. Without women, Ms. White pointed out, there might not have been a Christian religion. Mary of Magdalene was the first person to state that Jesus had risen from the dead; the first convert to Christian religion was Lydia, a maker of purple. Religious attitudes continue to resist because of the lack of understanding. There is a dual ethical stand in our culture. There must be education as to the worth of the female; for in oppression both the oppressor and the oppressed will fail. A society is only as strong as the weakest link and on the basis of empirical evidence the quality of life must improve.

Mildred Bercik outlined some of the factors that reduce the options for women to achieve a good quality of life. She told of cases of early pregnancies among teen age girls; school drop outs; inadequate role models; the welfare cycle. There are some cases, Ms. Bercik said, of 5 generations of welfare families. Other factors she mentioned are drugs and for those under 18 the added factor of venereal disease and alcohol abuse. In South Carolina in 1980 there were 4,290 births to women under 17 years of age. Many of the social problems come from lack of education. She told of instances where girls as young as 13 were encouraged by the mother to get married when a pregnancy is present. Many very young girls deliver babies without prenatal care simply because they don't know they are pregnant.

Legislative needs fall into the following areas Ms. Bercik said;

Have sex education in the schools...nurses suggest separate classes and invite nurses and doctors in for classes. There is an urgent need to have education before 8th grade.

Require blood tests before marriage. This would reveal RH blood type, venereal diseases, etc. ~~XXBILLYXXwonderingXXthatXXwouldXXandXXifXXtheXX marriageXXlicenseXXcouldXXcoverXXtheXXcostXXofXXtheXXexam.~~

A bill is pending to add \$5.00 to the marriage license fee to provide for shelters for battered wives.

A 1979 bill makes both parents responsible for the support of children in divorce. A problem is not only desertion by males but also mothers. One of the biggest problems for social service is the tremendous need for solicitors to hear child abuse cases (by law the case must be heard in 10 days, but children are held in foster homes while cases wait to be heard).

Mrs. Sprague pointed out that one of the primary purposes of the Legislative Day is to understand the effect of public decisions on ways and places women live... local, state, federal officials both elected and appointed make decisions daily which affect women and their lives.

The Honorable Irene K. Rudnick, Member S. C. House of Representatives spoke of Legislative priorities for the 1982 General Assembly. When legislators were asked this question 66% felt reapportionment was the most important issue. This must be done on the basis of the 1980 census and with the decision of Baker VS. Carr and Reynolds VS Simms the apportionment must be according to population. Prior to 1974 it was not an important issue because the legislators came from counties. The plan approved by the House last year redrawing the 124 House districts is being reviewed by the Justice Department. Now it must be shown that the black voting strength was not diluted in 16 districts in violation of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It is important that this be settled prior to candidate filing deadlines...some as early as March. Ms. Rudnick stated that the highest proportion of the State Appropriation goes to education but even so upgrading the educational system must be considered a priority. She said that it is hoped that within the next 2 years all children will

be attending public kindergarten. Attention continues to be given to the basic skills assessment plan. There is some objection from teachers to the increase in paper work. Also consideration is being to the mandatory election of school Boards of Education (some are not appointed). The Education Finance Act will be funded.

South Carolina faces the loss of \$125,000,000 in Federal programs in the next 2 years. The fiscal year of the U. S. Congress and S. C. are not the same and it poses a problem in accommodating the loss. A bill is now in the House to disallow the discriminatory provision in applying insurance rates. At present males 17 - 25 have a higher rate than females of the same age. The house has passed a bill and it is in the Senate to change the state Blue Laws to remove the restriction of only 3 employees working on Sunday. There is a bill providing that foreign nuclear waste not be stored in S. C. There has been progress in the elimination of S. C. serving as the storage of 50% now down from 85%) nuclear waste from other areas. Governor Riley considers this as high high priority.

The Honorable Hyman Rubin, Member S. C. Senate, spoke of his satisfaction in the progress of women. He expressed his hatred of injustice....all injustice, he said, is cut out of the same cloth. He mentioned that the seal for the City of Columbia written in Latin translates, "Justice - Queen of Virtues". Historically, he recalled for the participants, women were little more than chattel. The only fortunate women were those with kindly fathers or husbands. Everyone he feels is entitled to burgeon outside of themselves whatever is in themselves.

He outlined the struggle that is going on in the congressional reapportionment. There are restrictions to be faced such as: metropolitan areas not to be separated; not place incumbents against each other in reelection; the numerical restriction; the two party system. Senator Rubin thinks the General Assembly may be unable to solve the issue and will have to let a three judge federal panel draw the new map. The judges are to begin Feb. 11 hearing arguments regarding the longstanding problem.

There is a bill pending in the senate that would raise the fee for marriage licenses to provide shelters for battered spouses. In Columbia the shelters are getting more than 55 calls a month and are unable to handle the number. He pointed out that civilization is thousands of years old and it is only now getting to the point of helping in this problem area. Training is now being provided by the Technical Centers for displaced homemakers....in the amount of \$50,000. He spoke with praise of the S. C. Commission on Women. The de-institutionalizing of elderly people is a concern. More women occupy nursing homes than men. He told of a pilot project in Spartanburg which was funded for \$950,000 and has had good results and it is possible that the plan may be state wide. The purpose is to mobilize the community to keep people out of nursing homes. It is thought that with this plan 25% can remain in the community. There is a bill sponsored by the Commission on Aging to provide protection for people in apartments that are converted to condominiums. Under this provision 180 days would be given with the right to purchase; another 60 days to make other living arrangements; another 60 days to make final decisions. There are 1,000 units in Columbia that have been converted from apartments to condominiums. Senator Rubin told how easy it is to block legislation in the senate.

Mrs. Sprague introduced the head table during the luncheon with 25 legislators as special guests. Legislators attending were: Senator Thomas A. Moore, Aiken; Lt. Governor Nancy Stevenson, guest of Charleston Branch; Representatives Robert A. Kohn, John D. Bradley, Clyde Dangerfield, Charleston; Senators Nell Smith and Alexander Macauley, Clemson Branch; Senator Heyward E. McDonald, Columbia Branch; Representative James B. Brandt, Denmark Branch; Senator Thomas E. Smith, Rep. Robin Tallon, Florence Branch; Representatives Michael Daniel and Olin R. Phillips, Gaffney Branch; Rep. Thomas Hughston, Greenwood Branch; Representatives Samuel Foster, Herbert Kirsh, Palmer Freeman, John C. Hayes III, Rock Hill Branch; Rep. T. W. Edwards, Jr., Spartanburg Branch; Rep. William Branton, Summerville Branch. Special Guests also were: Senator Hyman Rubin, Columbia; Representative Irene K. Rudnick, Aiken; Barbara Moxon, S. C.

Commission on Women; Evelyn Hughes, Member County Council Cherokee County; Malissa Burnette, Executive Aide to Lt. Gov. Nancy Stevenson.

Ellie Setser, President S. C. Division AAUW presented the luncheon address. Excerpts from her talk under separate heading.

The Legislative Conference adjourned for members to attend committee meetings and the House and Senate in session. It is unusual for both houses to be in session during this particular time, said Malissa Burnette who outlines the opportunities for participants during the afternoon legislative session.

ERA UPDATE.....

ERA Update was given by Ms. Barbara Moxon, S. C. Commission on Women, who was introduced by Jean Slider, AAUW ERA Coordinator.

Mrs. Moxon reported that the appeal to the Supreme Court on Judge Marion Callister's decision (Idaho v. Freeman) was by a vote of 1-20 put on the shelf until a future time. It would certainly be after the end of the extension for ERA ratification and perhaps never be brought up again. AAUW as an original amicus curiae joined with other national organizations in the appeal to the Supreme Court for review. The ERA bill in Oklahoma was defeated 21-27 in the Senate. Under a motion to reconsider there is only remote possibility of passage there. In Virginia the new governor is Pro ERA and some gains were made in the House. It appears at this time that if a vote were taken in the Senate it would result in a 20 - 20 tie. The Speaker of the House is very anti ERA and actively opposed. In Georgia on 1-19-82 the House voted the bill 6-3 out of committee and by a vote of 116-27 it was defeated. In March primary elections will take place in Illinois. Pro ERA forces are still pressing to change the rule from 3/5 to a majority vote needed for ratification of constitutional amendments. It is believed that chances have never been better. In Florida pro forces feel they are only 2 votes short in the Senate and hold a bare majority in the House. The vote here must come before March 18, 1982.

Ms. Moxon declared that failure is impossible, and outlined the exciting media campaign and its progress. Targeted states until Feb. 19 were Oklahoma, Georgia, Virginia, Missouri and Florida. After February 19 media campaign will focus on other states including S. C. and N. C. \$750,000 time and expertise has been donated in addition to the monetary contributions for the campaign.

The administration in Washington has been cutting away at women's rights, said Ms. Moxon. Cuts in programs such as: CETA, Child Care, erosion of minimum Social Security (87% of those receiving Minimum Social Security are women). Forces to combat this are working diligently. Organizations in S. C. include ERA-S. C., People of Faith S. C., and individual efforts with legislators and the governor.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION FROM S. C. ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS

In a called Board Meeting the S. C. Division American Association of University Women voted to take \$1,000 from savings account and contribute to the Joint Media Campaign. This is designated as an educational-climate building media campaign.